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Letter dated 27 June 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Gambia to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 7 June 2001, and other attachments addressed to me, for the attention of my Government.

In response to your request contained in your letter mentioned above, I am enclosing a letter addressed to you by Momodou Lamin Sedat Jobe, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Gambia.

I should therefore be most grateful if you could please circulate the letter as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Baboucarr-Blaise Ismaila **Jagne**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 27 June 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Gambia to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee

I refer to your communications of 7 June 2001, conveying the content of resolution 1343 (2001), and 4 June 2001, addressed to the Permanent Representative of the Gambia.

Following the release of the report of the Security Council Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone Diamonds and Arms, the Government of the Gambia, through its Permanent Representative in New York, addressed a letter on 23 January 2001 to you, inviting the Panel of Experts to visit the Gambia before the Security Council considered the report.

I am therefore surprised that, despite the fact that no reaction to my Government's request was forthcoming from you and without any pre-information or request for clarification from the Gambia, when the subject of sanctions on Liberia was being discussed, a Gambian national, Baba Jobe, has been included in the list of Liberian nationals affected by the Security Council travel ban. I am even more amazed by the fact that the mention of Mr. Jobe's name on the list was accompanied neither by an indication of his passport number nor his date of birth, as is the case with the other persons affected by the sanction.

Following informal enquiries with the sanctions Committee, my Representative at the United Nations was informed that the inclusion of Mr. Jobe's name on the list was a result of a request from the French, British and United States Governments. Consequently a formal request was sent to you, demanding the details surrounding such a serious allegation which the Government of the Gambia definitely cannot treat lightly, if it is corroborated with evidence.

Having waited for almost four weeks for your response, we have taken it upon ourselves to inform the Gambian public that we believe that the decision to include a Gambian on the list was a well-calculated move and is prejudicial to my country, which despite its size has been playing a major role in the quest for peace and stability in the West African subregion beyond. Furthermore, my Department of State has decided to inform the international community about the very undemocratic, illegal and non-transparent manner in which the Security Council handled this matter.

The Government of the Gambia is aggrieved by the fact that a decision of such magnitude has been taken without any research and consultations with the country affected. It must be noted that situations like this one will, sooner rather than later, undermine the moral authority of the sanctions Committee. When I consulted with the British, French and American Missions in the Gambia, they did not seem to know about the origin of the inclusion of the Gambian national. This can hardly be an illustration of the high standard of justice and equity that is expected of the Committee in passing judgement on Member States and their citizens.

It is my belief that the inclusion of the Gambian national in the list is an error which is of great prejudice to the individual and the prestige of the Gambia as a country.

Let me draw your attention to the fact that the Gambia, as a signatory to the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small

Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, signed in 1998, is the only State that has not so far requested a waiver of the Moratorium in order to import or export arms. The Gambian President, Alhaji Yahya A. J. J. Jammeh, has even gone beyond that and informed Member States parties to the agreement very clearly that, if they continue to request waivers, there would be no raison d'être for the Moratorium.

Against this background, therefore, describing a Gambian official as an arms trafficker is not only a very serious matter but a case that has to be followed up, so that the Gambian public can have all the details necessary for a better understanding of the matter. It is our belief that this accusation is unfounded, because if it were true the matter would have been treated more professionally and we would have received a detailed communication from the Committee prior to the publication of the list. If the foregoing is confirmed the sanctions Committee must convince the whole world that it is fair and respectable and has the courage of recognizing its mistakes when they do occur, especially when they tarnish the international reputation of a State Member of the United Nations which gave invaluable service to the Security Council during the two years that it served as one of its non-permanent members.

While awaiting your reactions, I beg you to accept the assurances of my highest consideration and the sincere will of the Government and people of the Gambia to assist the Security Council in its endeavour to create a world of peace, justice and equity.

Momodou Lamin Sedat **Jobe**
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs